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ADVANCE FOR 5 P.M. EST (760)

(ADVANCE) NEW YORK, JULY 18 (AP)--THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF THE 1961 CUBAN INVASION RIGHT UP TO THE MOMENT HE GAVE THE FINAL GO-AHEAD, HISTORIAN AND FORMER PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR. SAID TODAY. THE REPORT, THE SECOND IN A SERIES IN LIFE MAGAZINE, IS FROM SCHLESINGER'S FORTHCOMING BOOK, "A THOUSAND DAYS: JOHN F. KENNEDY IN THE WHITE HOUSE."

KENNEDY FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE CUBAN INVASION PLANS FROM CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY DIRECTOR ALLEN DULLES 12 DAYS AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SCHLESINGER SAID.

AT THAT TIME, THE PLAN ALREADY WAS FAR ADVANCED AND KENNEDY GAVE DIRECTIONS FOR IT TO PROCEED, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT HIS INTEREST DID NOT MEAN COMMITMENT TO THE OPERATION.

"HE THEN AUTHORIZED THE CIA TO CONTINUE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE INVASION WOULD OCCUR," SCHLESINGER WROTE, "BUT HE...ADDED, CAREFULLY AND CATEGORICALLY, THAT THE EXPEDITION MUST BE LAID ON IN A WAY WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO CALL IT OFF AS LATE AS 24 HOURS BEFORE D-DAY."

SCHLESINGER SAID THAT ON MARCH 28, 1961, HE ASKED KENNEDY WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE INVASION. "I THINK ABOUT IT AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE," HE SAID THE PRESIDENT REPLIED.

THE HISTORIAN ADDED, "IN HIS JUDGMENT, THE CRITICAL POINT--THE WEAK PART OF THE CASE FOR GOING AHEAD--LAY IN THE THEORY THAT THE LANDINGS WOULD TOUCH OFF A MASS INSURRECTION AGAINST THE REGIME (OF CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO). THE PRESIDENT, IT SEEMED TO ME, WAS GROWING STEADILY MORE SKEPTICAL AS HIS HARD QUESTIONING EXPOSED ONE PROBLEM AFTER ANOTHER IN THE PLANS."

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